



# WORLD JOURNAL FOR SAND THERAPY PRACTICE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

## BOOK REVIEW

*Understanding Children's Sandplay: Lowenfeld's World Technique.*

by Marshall Lyles

Auguste Comte said, "To understand a science, it is necessary to know its history". Though the history of modern-day sand therapy has roots in ancient healing practices among multiple cultural groups, sand therapy practices in professional mental health are often traced back to the pioneering work of Dr. Margaret Lowenfeld. To adequately understand sand therapy, one needs to be acquainted with Dr. Lowenfeld.

Dr. Lowenfeld's book *Understanding Children's Sandplay: Lowenfeld's World Technique* was published posthumously, but the majority of the text had been written years before its publication. In this work, Lowenfeld describes the circumstances that led her to the conviction that children (and later generalized to all ages of humans) deserve to have options of expression of their internal worlds not requiring verbal ability. She thoroughly discusses the circumstances involved in discovering needed materials in sand work, giving credit to her child clients for much of this innovation that led to the establishment of the World Technique (a precursor to modern sand therapy).

The majority of this publication focuses on three extensive case studies that include pictorial recreations of the clients' created worlds alongside extensive notes. The text features Lowenfeld's unfolding understanding of the therapeutic processes at play in clients' sand worlds. The book concludes with Lowenfeld addressing lessons learned from witnessing these worlds and with some brief discussion on the origin of World Technique terms and concepts.

Though written in language that a modern reader could find occasionally dense, this work holds historic importance in the establishment of the field of sand therapy. It is a worthwhile endeavor to become acquainted with the sacrifices involved in developing a healing practice that was countercultural and contrary to much of the "wisdom" of the age. Sand therapists of all backgrounds could benefit from spending time with Dr. Lowenfeld and her inner world.

Lowenfeld, M. (1979). *Understanding children's sandplay: Lowenfeld's World Technique*. George Allen & Unwin.

